

## Prospectus - Appendix C

### Spencer Glacier Whistle Stop Recreation Capacity

February 19, 2015

#### Summary:

This capacity study is for recreation activities that utilize the Spencer Whistle Stop. It includes all summer recreational use, both by the general non-guided public, and by the clients of outfitter/guides. The Spencer Whistle Stop has been providing outstanding recreational opportunities to the public since 2003; however, opportunities to secure a permit to provide outfitted recreational trips have not been available pending the issuance of a prospectus.

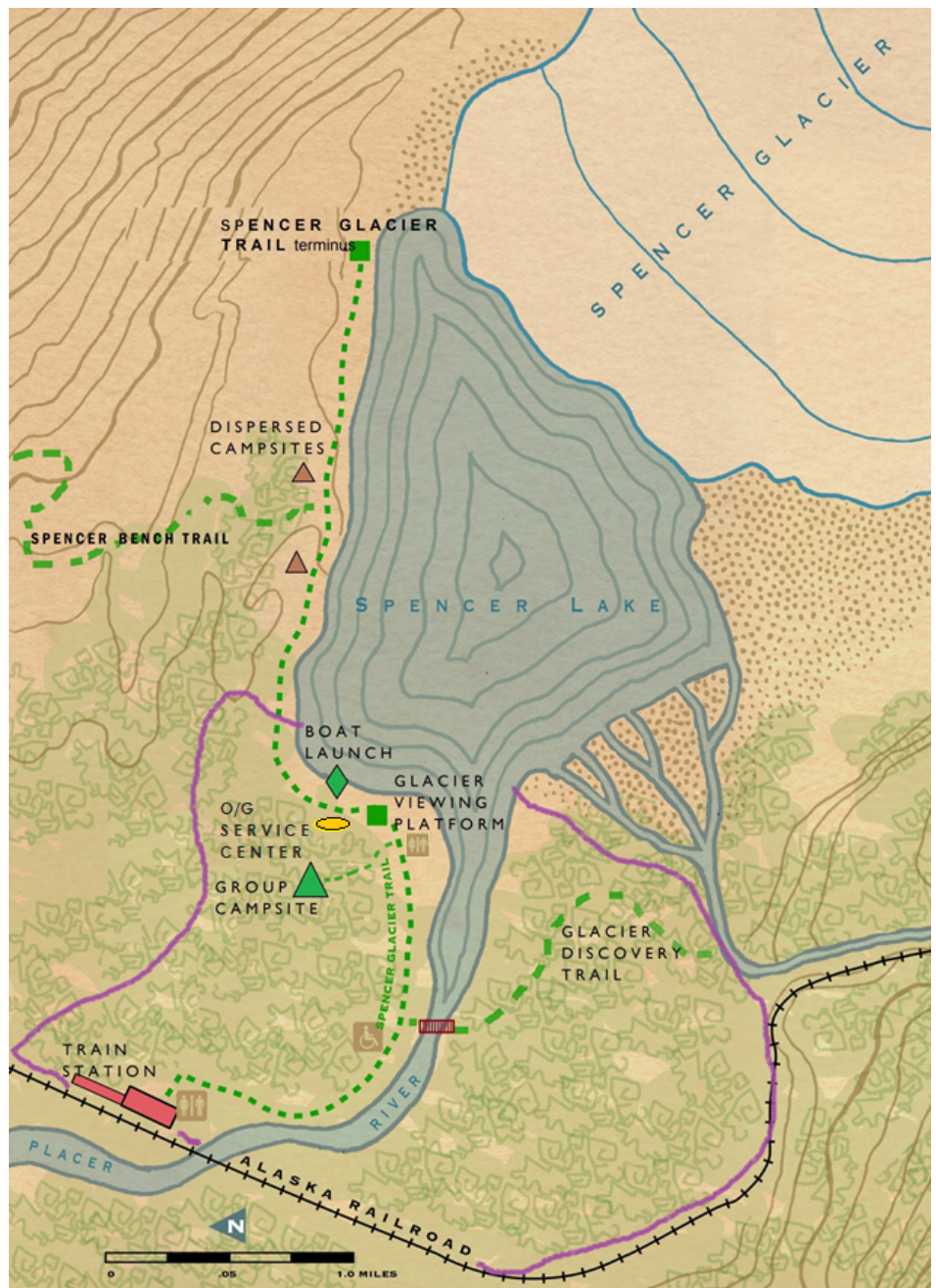
The prospectus defines how many and what type of services may be provided by outfitters/guides, based on the capacity established in this document.

A Recreation Capacity is needed to guide summer commercial recreation service providers (Outfitter/Guides), so that the amount and type of use is consistent with the summer recreation experience outlined in the Chugach National Forest Plan and the desired future condition identified in the Whistle Stop Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD, 2006).

This capacity study provides guidance for activities utilizing the Spencer Whistle Stop, the Developed recreation area, Spencer Lake, and the trails leading up to Spencer Glacier. This analysis establishes the appropriate types and levels of recreation use.

In general, Forest Plan guidelines set standards for determining the maximum possible capacity utilizing the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum. This threshold is set so that the recreation experience is consistent with the expectations defined in a certain management area. This threshold is also

influenced by other site-specific Forest Service planning documents, such as the Whistle Stop EIS and ROD. This threshold may also be influenced by other site-specific factors such as lack of infrastructure, limited train stops, and



unacceptable affects to wildlife, cultural or other resources. For example, the existing condition of the Luebner Lake river take out limits the capacity to approximately 50 people at one time—yet the capacity study would allow groups sizes up to 100. If infrastructure is added or removed, or additional train trips are offered to the Whistle Stop, the approved recreation activity levels as solicited through prospectus or approved through special use permits could be revised within the recommended capacity established in this document. These barriers or Potential limits to the maximum recommended social capacity are identified later in this document.

### **Whistle Stop Plan and Existing Condition**

The purpose and need of the Whistle Stop project is to provide additional backcountry access and increase recreation opportunities available to Chugach National Forest Visitors and to provide a unique recreation experience found nowhere else in the United States (DEIS 2006). The recreation developments approved for the project were designed to meet Forest Service guidelines for recreation settings and recreation facilities consistent with ROS class (ROD 2006). The overall intent of the project is to provide forest visitors with a high quality, backcountry experience. It was recognized that within the developed recreation area group sizes and the levels of encounter would be higher, but beyond the developed area facilities would be designed so that they are subordinate to the landscape and promote a minimum level of encounters (ROD, p. 10).

The Whistle Stop ROD maintained a backcountry experience by aligning the amount and type of recreation infrastructure development with the Forest Plan management area guidelines and the appropriate ROS setting (ROD p. 2-5). For example, group campsites were approved in the Developed Recreation Complex (DRC) Management Area where as dispersed campsites were approved in the Backcountry Management areas. In some cases, the Whistles Stop ROD also established group sizes that are more conservative than ROS guidelines. For example, capacity at the group campsite within the developed recreation area was set at 25 people (as compared to a maximum recommended capacity of 100 in the ROS). Capacity at the dispersed campsites along Spencer Glacier trail was recommended at 18 (assuming a maximum of 6 people at one time at three approved sites). Other than these two specific adjustments to capacity, the Whistles top plan incorporates Forest Plan guidelines for capacity by ROS class, as described below.

Construction of recreation facilities at Spencer began in 2006. Facilities now include a train station platform with two partially enclosed waiting areas, interpretive panels and an outhouse. A smooth, gravel-surfaced trail leads towards Spencer Lake. A group campsite, outhouse and viewing area are about 1.5 miles from the train station. The trail continues another 1.5 miles where the more adventurous may be able to find a route onto the glacier. Two additional dispersed campsites are located about 2 miles from the train station. The Spencer Bench Trail leads to a Forest Service Public Use cabin at approximately 1,900 elevation, and the Glacier Discovery Trail leads across Placer River for another mile. This trail will eventually connect to the Grandview Whistle Stop.

Access to the site is relatively costly. Access by the railroad requires purchase of a train ticket, currently at \$70 for the least expensive ride (Portage to Spencer, 2013). In addition to the train summer time access is available by helicopter, power boat. The river is extremely difficult to navigate above Luebner Lake, due to braided stream channels and fluctuating river levels. The snow-free cross-country travel of at least 8 miles is nearly impossible due to wetlands and brushy vegetation.

The limited independent access to the site helps to manage the crowding aspect. The primary method of access to the site is by train and through the service of an outfitter guide. Outfitter guide services were permitted prior to development of the Whistle Stop ROD. Outfitter guide services have included raft trips down the placer river, tours of Spencer Lake with non-motorized craft, and guided hiking and ice climbing. Any significant changes in services offered or use levels have been deferred until completion of the recreation infrastructures at Spencer (completed in 2014 with completion of the Placer River Bridge) and completion of this capacity study. In general, the services currently being provided by existing outfitter guide permits are consistent with this capacity study, and the current use levels are below recommended levels.

The Whistle Stop site now provides a unique recreation opportunity for people: a short train ride brings them to a small train station area, where they disembark and find themselves surrounded by snow-capped peaks towering over 4000'. Spencer Glacier pours out between the mountains, emptying into Spencer Lake, providing an ice-berg studded, awe-inspiring landscape. This capacity study will outline a framework for recommended activities and use levels so that additional outfitter guide use may be solicited, up to a level consistent with providing a quality backcountry experience.

## Recommended Activities, Conditions and Guidelines

The Forest Service would like to promote a backcountry experience for people who visit the Spencer Whistle Stop where they can appreciate the beauty of the surrounding landscape and escape the hustle and bustle of modern life, with simple facilities that provide a sense of security and offer basic comfort. The limited development is meant to allow people who may not otherwise venture off into the wilds of Alaska a glimpse of what the Alaskan backcountry is all about.

In order to do this, the guiding principles in this capacity study are to:

1. Promote opportunities for solitude, especially in the area outside of the DRC, off of trails and beyond Spencer lake shoreline. These opportunities will be achieved through management of group size and levels of encounter.
2. Limit activities that would add non-natural noise or visuals impacts to the visitor's experience. This objective will be met through the type of recreation use recommended.

Considering the site-specific management objectives identified in the Whistle Stop EIS and ROD, along with Forest Plan management guidelines, the following recommendations for activities and services that originate or terminate at the Spencer Whistle Stop, provided by Outfitter/Guides:

- 1) **SPENCER LAKE BOATING:** All boating on the lake and the majority of river float trips will originate in the general vicinity the existing boat launch site. Boats may be stored on or near the lake, out-of-sight of the trail as much as possible, or off-site and transported to launch site as needed.
  - a) Non-motorized boating on Spencer Lake: Although the Forest Plan does not provide specific direction for Spencer Lake, the general land management direction for this area is "open for helicopters, closed to OHV's". Applying this limited motorized use concept to the lake will provide opportunities for quiet recreation as prescribed in the Backcountry Management Prescription, and help provide the backcountry recreation experience for this area. Appropriate non-motorize craft includes kayaks, rafts, paddleboards, canoes, row and other self-powered boats. Small boat sizes (10 passengers max) are recommended, with dark colors on surfaces above water and low profile (no sails) in order to minimize visual impacts.
- 2) **PLACER RIVER FLOAT TRIPS**
  - a) Non-motorized float trips starting on Spencer Lake: even though this use starts on Spencer Lake, the boats do not venture far towards the glacier. Instead, they follow the shoreline south, past the viewing platform to where Placer River flows out of the lake. This use **will not be** considered lake use for capacity determinations. Rafts, canoes, kayaks and packrafts and other muscle-powered personal watercraft are the type of boats suitable for this use. The size and appearance of watercraft is described in "1.a", above.
  - b) Non-motorized float trips starting on Placer River, or other locations other than Spencer Lake: A river launch site may be possible on the south side of Placer River footbridge, or along various sections of the trail to the viewing platform. Regardless of launch site, this use will also be part of river's capacity.



- 3) **HIKING:** Outfitter guide assisted hiking would be suitable on all developed trails within the Developed Recreation Complex and beyond this area. Guided hiking could occur on the following trails
- a) Spencer Glacier Trail within the DRC: from the train station to the boat launch site (1.5 mi). Several short spurs provide access to other facilities, including a bridge across Placer River that provides the connection to the Glacier Discovery Trail; a group campsite; a viewing platform; and a boat launch site. The Forest Service currently provides interpreter-led hikes for train riders who purchase a Spencer Whistle Stop ticket. These Forest Service led hikes are expected to continue. Outfitter guide led hikes are not in conflict with this service.
  - b) Spencer Glacier Trail beyond the DRC: the trail continues another 1.5 miles out towards the toe of the Glacier, and provides access to two dispersed camp sites (from 2 different spur trails) and the Spencer Bench Trail.
  - c) Spencer Bench Trail: climbs approximately 2100' to a site where a public use cabin was constructed in 2014. This trail is planned to continue north, ending at Luebner Lake.
  - d) Glacier Discovery Trail: begins on the footbridge across Placer River. It is currently 1 mile to a future bridge site across the Upper Placer River (stream entering Spencer Lake). This trail will eventually continue south another 9 miles to the Grandview Whistle Stop.
- 4) **GLACIER HIKE/CLIMB:** Due to the dynamic changing face of Spencer Glacier, access via the Spencer Glacier trail is not currently possible. Access by boat, to the south side of the glacier is the most readily accessible route. The current permitted operator has arranged for train ride back to Portage on the Coastal Classic, giving them enough time to conduct this longer day trip.
- a) Access to the glacier could be via helicopter. No landings would be permitted within the DRC. Access by helicopter could allow hikers several trip options, such as hiking out to the Spencer Whistle Stop and riding out on the train after landing on the glacier, or beginning with a train ride to the Whistle Stop, hiking and paddling to the glacier, and then flying from the glacier back to the road system. Any guided use associated with helicopter landings would be considered part of the capacity determinations for use on Spencer Glacier.
  - b) The capacity of the glacier to accommodate multiple parties is quite large. However, there are limited access routes onto the glacier. At this time, glacier access from the Spencer Glacier Trail is very difficult. Similarly, boat access may be limited to a select few routes, meaning parties could encounter each other as they enter and leave the glacier. If helicopter access is used, all other parties would experience a harsh, but brief encounter.
  - c) The capacity of the glacier to accommodate multiple parties without encountering others is also limited by glacial features. Melting and calving change the face daily during summer warming and rain events, and suitable/safe hiking or climbing routes constantly change.
- 5) **CAMPING:** Guided overnight camping would be suitable outside of the developed recreation area. Two of the three approved dispersed sites along the Spencer Glacier trail have been developed. However, these designated sites are intended for small group sizes and for public use. Similarly, the developed group campsite in the developed recreation area is intended for public use.
- a) New hardened campsites are needed for exclusive use by O/G and their clients.
  - b) The recommended area for outfitter guide use is on the south side of Spencer lake, this would provide an adequate buffer between the public camping at the sites along the Spencer Glacier trail
  - c) Similar to the designated sites on the Spencer Glacier trail, minimum improvements are recommended such as hardened tent platforms and bear-safe food storage devices.
  - d) Specific guidelines for size and style of tents, amount of clearing and amount of site manipulation would be addressed in the specific special use permit.
- 6) **TRANSPORTATION:** Many of the recreational opportunities for the general public are located over a mile from the train station. Some of these activities require gear, such as inflatable boats to use on the lake, or camping gear. Additionally, some visitors are not able to walk to the area's features in the time allotted by the train's schedule. The outfitter guides who currently have permits to operate in the area have busses or vans to transport clients and their gear to the lake launch area.

- a) Transportation services should be available to the general public from the train station area to the lake area.
- b) Consideration should be given to vehicles that have a smaller impact on the backcountry environment, including vehicles with less noise and emissions.
- c) The parking and storage of vehicles and the timing of their use for guided activities should be designed to minimize the potential impact to recreationist not utilizing this shuttle service.

### **Non-recommended activities or activities outside the scope of this capacity study**

**Motorized Use on Placer Lake:** No special use permits have been awarded for these types of activities. Although the ROS setting is semi primitive motorized, this prescription is intended to allow for helicopter use but preclude OHVs or other ground based motorized use. Therefore motorized use would not be consistent with Forest Plan standards. Motorized use would also create noise impacts that are inconsistent with promoting solitude within a backcountry setting. It should be noted that the general public is not prohibited from using a motorized boat on Placer River and Spencer Lake, and this use, though infrequent, would likely continue.

**Bikes:** No special use permits have been awarded for this activity. This activity is consistent with the ROS setting. However, bike use should not be encouraged on the Spencer Glacier Trail within the developed recreation area. This trail has been designed as a level 4, fully accessible trail. Bike use with the amount of hiking activity and the type of user on this trail would likely cause recreation user conflicts and possible safety concerns. Therefore bike use was not approved in the Whistle Stop ROD (p. 5). The development of other designated bike trails within the DRC should be considered, but is beyond the scope of this analysis.

### **Recommended group size, use levels and encounters**

Recreation Capacity is addressed in the Forest Plan through guidelines defined by the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) Class assigned to the area. Forest-wide Recreation and Tourism Standard no. 2 (Forest Plan pg. 3-35) states “Management activities will be designed to meet the ROS classes as mapped. Within a watershed association area, ROS class acreage may be changed up to 20% within the range shown in table 3-7 without amending the Forest Plan. In no case may the effects of an activity exceed the setting criteria of the highest ROS class in the range.”

The developed Spencer Whistle Stop was designated a Developed Recreation Complex (DRC) in the Forest Plan, where facilities are developed for user comfort and convenience and have the ability to accommodate large numbers of people in a natural appearing setting. Frequent interaction with other parties is to be expected. The DRC is shown on the map on the first page of this study by a pink line.

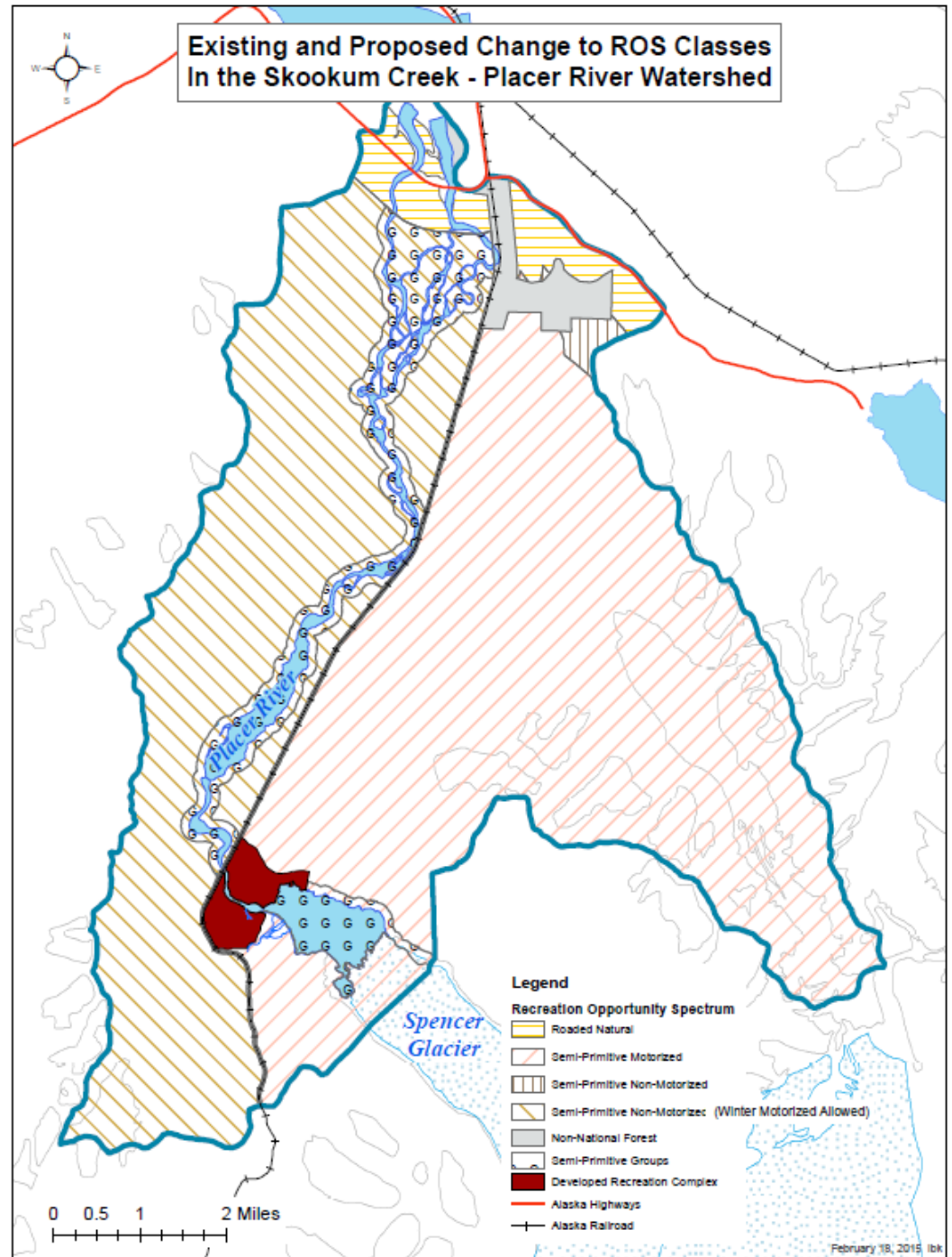
The ROS for the Spencer Whistle Stop DRC is Roaded Modified (RM). Forest Plan ROS guidelines for RM specify that opportunities for solitude are low on trails and on shorelines, and moderate to low off trails or shorelines. This translates to a high likelihood of encounters on trails, moderate likelihood of encounters on shorelines, and a low likelihood of encounters when off of trails or shorelines. There is no maximum party size. The degree of risk and challenge is moderate to low. This ROS class applies to the developed recreation facilities within the DRC, including the boat launch, the viewing platform, the trail from the train station area to the boat launch, the group campground, and the train station area itself.

The area immediately surrounding the Spencer Whistle Stop DRC is in the Backcountry Prescription, where a variety of backcountry recreational opportunities and activities are managed to maintain natural appearing landscapes, with opportunities for solitude, isolation and quiet. This is the predominant management prescription on the Kenai Peninsula.

The ROS class for the area surrounding the Developed Recreation Complex is Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM). Forest Plan ROS guidelines show opportunities for solitude are moderate on trails and on shorelines, and high off trails or shorelines. This translates to a moderate likelihood of encounters on trails, and a low likelihood of encounters elsewhere. Party size should be under 30. Degree of risk and challenge is high to moderate.

Utilizing Forest-wide Recreation & Tourism Standard No. 2 (described on the preceding page); up to 20% of the watershed association's ROS acreage can become one of the other ROS classes in the range shown in Table 3-7 (forest plan). This standard would allow up to 7,413 acres to become Semi-Primitive Groups (SPG) ROS class. This capacity analysis is predicated on utilizing this standard on 3,340 acres, along the river and lake shorelines, as depicted on the map at right, to allow party sizes of up to 100 people. SPG ROS class retains the same level of encounters prescribed for SPM, with a moderate to low degree of risk and challenge.

The SPG ROS area will create a buffer zone between the DRC's busy, developed setting and the Backcountry's nearly-wild setting. The SPG ROS class also most closely represents the existing recreation use levels, since one of the existing raft guides has operated with parties over the 30 people maximum allowed for in the SPM ROS class frequently each season.



The chart below (based on table 3-8, pg. 3-38 & 39, Forest Plan) provides the numerical guidelines for the ROS Classes covered in this analysis:

ROS Class	Solitude (on trails or shorelines)	Solitude (off trails or shorelines)	level of encounters <sup>1</sup>			max party size
			on trails	on shorelines	off trails & shorelines	
RM roaded modified	low	moderate to low	HIGH unlimited parties/day; unlimited parties w/in sight or sound of camp/cabin	MODERATE less than 15 parties/day; unlimited parties w/in sight or sound of camp/cabin	LOW less than 6 parties/day; no parties w/in sight or sound of camp/cabin	no maximum
SPM semi- primitive motorized	moderate	high	MODERATE less than 15 parties/day; 3 or less parties w/in sight or sound of camp/cabin	LOW less than 6 parties/day; no parties w/in sight or sound of camp/cabin	LOW less than 6 parties/day; no parties w/in sight or sound of camp/cabin	30
SPG Semi- primitive Groups	high	high	- - - - - Same as SPM - - - - -			100

<sup>1</sup> level of encounters may be exceeded for up to 15% of the primary use season (approximately 1/day/week average)

The recommended level of encounters described above includes encounters with all parties—both guided and non-guided. The Forest Plan prescribes that encounters should be allocated equally to both guided and non-guided use. Therefore, not more than 50% of these encounters would be allocated to outfitter guides. The chart below shows the maximum amount of use that will be considered for the Spencer Glacier Whistle Stop outfitter guide use. The pages following this chart provide the rationale for how these capacities were determined.

No.	Activity	Maximum O/G Capacity at one time	Recommendations/notes
1	Boating on Spencer Lake	3 parties of up to 100 each	Because these trips originate on the shore of the developed recreation area a group size is permitted to be 100.
2	Floating on Placer River	3 parties of up to 100	Same as above. Although these trips may originate from the same boat launch, the trips heading down the river quickly separate from the lake and glacier tour; therefore, they are not included within the capacity recommendation for the lake.
3	Hiking within the DRC	Unlimited parties, no party size limit	Forest Service interpretive hikes are anticipated to continue, guided outfitter hikes are consistent with this service.
4	Hiking outside of the DRC	7 parties of up to 100 people on the Spencer Glacier Trail within the DRC, 7 parties of up to 30 on Spencer Glacier Trail outside the DRC or on the Glacier Bench Trail or Glacier Discovery Trail.	



5	Glacier hiking/climbing	3 parties up to 100 each	At this time, because of the limited safe access to the glacier via a Spencer Lake route, 3 parties are recommended. It is possible with greater access to the glacier, such as the re-establishment of a trail route additional use could be prescribed. However, no more than 3 parties per day that utilize helicopters to provide guided access to the glacier are recommended.
6	Camping	3 parties up to 10 each separated (no sight/sound of each other)	Guided camping should be designated on the south side of Spencer Lake/Placer River.
7	Transportation	There are no recommendations on the number or size of motorized shuttle service.	

DRC = Developed Recreation Complex – see map, page 2

**1) Non-motorized boating on Spencer Lake:**

- a) The lake is within the Backcountry Management Area, bordered by the Developed Recreation Complex MA on its west shore on approximately than 1/8 of its shoreline.
- b) The ROS class in the DRC is RM; for the Backcountry MA it is SPM.
- c) The ROS guidelines for SPM are less than 6 encounters/day on shorelines and less than 15 encounters/day on trails. This allows up to 6 parties on the lake at one time encountering each other, as well as people on shore outside of the DRC encountering parties using the lake. Half of the use (3 parties) can be provided by Outfitter/Guides. Each party could be up to 100 people.
- d) The existing size of the boat launch currently limits the amount of boat launches onto the lake. The launch site can only be used by one 100-person O/G party at a time. This limitation likely restricts the amount of recreational use on the lake and the river, because it limits the amount of boats that can launch, complete a tour, and still return in time for the afternoon train departure.
- e) A party size of 100 would generally be comprised of multiple boats. For example, ten 8-person rafts would result in a group size of 80. It is recommended that boat size be no larger than one that can carry 9 passengers plus 1 guide. Additionally, boats should have a low profile (no sails) to minimize how visible boats are by shore-based viewers.
- f) The lake is just over a mile long, and up to ¼ of a mile wide, about 200 acres, allowing for a wide dispersal of these boats. Small icebergs are common on the lake, helping to obscure the views/encounters between boaters and between boaters and shore-based people. It is anticipated that boaters would move from the launch directly towards the glacier, thereby staying fairly distant to shore-based viewers for the majority of the time they are on the lake. The recommended smaller size and low profile will make them difficult to see from over ½ mile.

**2) Non-motorized float trips on Placer River:**

- a) This use starts on the lake and continues onto the river.
- b) The lake and river are both in the Backcountry MA. A portion of the lake and the river are managed in an SPG ROS class. From the boat launch extending to the Whistle Stop platform, the lake and river border the Developed Recreation Complex. This shoreline bordering the DRC has a RM ROS.
- c) The daily O/G capacity for river use is 3 parties of 100 people
- d) Similar to the boat launch on Spencer Lake, the existing river take out at Luebner Lake restricts the amount of boats that can be pulled out of the river at one time. This is due the location and condition of the takeout, the proximity to the railroad tracks and the small staging area between the river and the tracks. This take out is located within the Alaska Railroad right of way. At present it can only accommodate 50 people at one time.



- 3) **Hiking Trails within the Developed Recreation Complex:** Forest Plan ROS guidelines do not restrict either the party size or number of encounters for people on trails, allowing unlimited opportunities for guided hiking starting at the train stop and ending just beyond the boat launch area, approximately 1.5 miles one-way. Capacity for hiking beyond this point is more limited to meet Forest Plan ROS guidelines.
- 4) **Hiking on Trails outside of the DRC:**
- a) The Spencer Glacier Trail outside of the DRC is located adjacent to Spencer Lake, in the Backcountry MA, with a SPG ROS, where less than 15 encounters/day on trails and a maximum party size of 100 is authorized. Each party has the potential to encounter all other parties on the trail, as they move out or back. Half (7) parties could be commercially-guided.
  - b) The Spencer Bench Trail, accessed from MP 2 of the Spencer Glacier trail, is in the Backcountry MA, with a SPM ROS, where less than 15 encounters/day on trails and a maximum party size of 30 is authorized. Each party has the potential to encounter all other parties on the trail, as they move out or back. Half (7) parties could be commercially-guided.
  - c) Until there are additional trains, day users would be hard-pressed to complete a hike on these trails. Most participants in this activity would need an alternative to the current afternoon train schedule.
- 5) **Hiking/ice climbing on Spencer Glacier:**
- a) Access to this activity can be from the Spencer Glacier trail, by boating across Spencer Lake, or by flying onto the ice via helicopter or fixed wing.
  - b) There is adequate space on the glacier to accommodate parties accessing the glacier from both the trail (potentially 7) and from the lake (potentially 3). At this time, due to ice conditions, the lake route is the most viable route.
  - c) Party size could be up to 100.
  - d) If helicopters are used to access guided hiking or ice climbing on the glacier, no more than three trips per day are recommended. The noise and visual impact of helicopters would likely be noticed by those camping at the lake or staying in the Spencer bench cabin; therefore, no more than three helicopter trips are recommended.
- 6) **Camping at Outfitter Guide dispersed site:**
- a) Opportunities for guided overnight camping should be provided where they do not conflict with existing independent camping at the dispersed campsites along Spencer Glacier Trail.
  - b) The location of the guided overnight camps would be on the south side of Spencer Lake between the trail and lake, likely along the lakeshore.
  - c) Specific camp locations could be within the DRC's ROS of RM or within the SPM ROS classes. These ROS classes recommend maximum group sizes of 100 and 30 respectively. However, guided camping group sizes are recommended to be a maximum party size of ten. This smaller group size is recommended to decrease the level of encounters between camp groups and groups recreating on Spencer Lake.
  - d) Minimum development of campsites is recommended, similar to the dispersed campsites along Spencer Glacier Trail. Hardened campsites and bear resistant storage boxes would be the appropriate level of development.
- 7) **Transportation:**
- a) This service has no capacity issues; it would be entirely within the DRC.
  - b) Parking space needs to be improved near the train so that vehicles are screened from view by people riding the train. Similarly, parking of vehicles near the lake should be located to avoid impacts to independent users.
  - c) The purpose of this service is to move gear and people for a fee. This is needed in order to make boating on Spencer Lake, camping with lots of gear, or access to the lakeshore for mobility-impaired people more readily available.

## Barriers to Capacity

The capacity levels described above are intended to provide a backcountry recreation experience that meets Forest Plan standards and the desired future condition outlined in the Whistle Stop planning documents. Even at the maximum recommended levels, a quality recreation experience would be sustained.

There are several existing facility and logistical barriers that presently limit the maximum recommended levels from being implemented. These factors include the limited capacity at the boat launch on Spencer Lake, the limited capacity at the Luebner Lake take out, and the limited train service to the site.

**Train Schedule.** The current train schedule provides a stop at Spencer Whistle Stop at approximately 1:30 with a departure of the train back to Anchorage at 4:30. The railroad has coordinated with the existing outfitter guides to also pick up passengers at Spencer on the evening train. Similarly, the railroad has dropped off passengers at the Spencer Whistle Stop on the morning train on a case by case basis. Neither the morning train nor the evening train service are advertised, or can be reserved for by the public.

Additional train service could allow greater recreation use of the Spencer area. In particular additional train service could allow for more boating on Spencer Lake and Placer River trips. For example, a morning train could accommodate three additional groups down Placer River. This additional use would not be in conflict with the capacity recommendations described above. This is because the morning trip would likely be completed before the afternoon trip began, thus capacity recommendations would still be met by not exceeding three groups at one time.

**Placer River take- out at Luebner Lake.** The existing river take out at Luebner Lake restricts the amount of boats that can be pulled out of the river at one time. This is due the location and condition of the takeout, the proximity to the railroad tracks and the small staging area between the river and the tracks. At present it can only accommodate 50 people at one time. Consequently, with the existing train schedule, only one group can use this site. Other authorized guided use would likely have to complete the entire river stretch and take out at the Seward highway.

**Spencer Lake Launch site.** As described above, the existing size of the boat launch currently limits the amount of boat launches onto the lake. This is due to the time requirements of gear preparation, skill demonstration and safety briefing which generally need to happen adjacent to, or in the water. Consequently, some recreation use may be restricted because trips cannot be completed with the amount of time available in the present train schedule. Development of a second boat launch would allow greater access to the lake and river and could allow more trips to be completed.